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ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

SUMMARY RECORD OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE  
CONCILIATION COMMISSION AND HIS EXCELLENCY

NURIES SAID, PRIME MINISTER OF IRAQ

held in Baghdad on 19 February 1949

Present:	H.E. Nuri es Said	- Prime Minister of Iraq
	H.E. Abdullah Hafidh	- Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq
	Mr. Yalchin (Turkey)	- Chairman
	Mr. de Boisanger (France)	
	Mr. Ethridge (U.S.A.)	
	Mr. Azcarate	- Principal Secretary

The CHAIRMAN explained the mission of peace and conciliation entrusted to the Commission by the General Assembly, and suggested the calling of a general preparatory conference of the Arab States which might serve to unify the points of view of these states on the various questions which then could become the subject of peace negotiations.

The PRIME MINISTER developed what was later to become the principal subject of the discussion, namely, the primary importance of knowing what would be the attitude of the Jews; what would be their ambitions and their claims; and, above all, the question of securing guarantees of their good faith. The Prime Minister discoursed at length on the constant bad faith which the Jews had shown in their political negotiations. He illustrated his points by anecdotes of his personal experience. He stated that the Jews could give a guarantee of their good faith when they talked of their desire for peace, by accepting the return of the refugees to their homes, as well as by agreeing to the internationalisation of Jerusalem. The Prime Minister was not optimistic on that score, and expressed the opinion that American pressure at Tel Aviv would constitute the only effective guarantee that the Jews would respect their undertakings. The Prime Minister then turned to the difficulties of an internal nature provoked by the Palestine question and by the attitude of the Jews, especially owing to the fact that there were in Iraq approximately

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150,000 Jews, of whom 100,000 were in Baghdad, and many of whom were very rich. The necessity of avoiding incidents and assuring their protection created serious difficulties for the services responsible for the maintenance of public order. In brief, the Prime Minister repeated that, without the assurance of the good faith of the Jews, he could not see how the Commission would be able to achieve a useful purpose. Nevertheless, keeping in mind the above-mentioned reservations, the Prime Minister expressed himself as willing for the Government of Iraq to take part in a conference of the nature proposed by the Chairman of the Commission.

Mr. ETHRIDGE underlined the importance that the Commission as well as the Government of the United States attached to the speedy re-establishment of peace in the Middle East. He expressed his agreement with the suggestion of the Chairman of convening a preparatory conference of the Arab States, and pointed out that, if peace negotiations were to await the study and perhaps even the solution of the refugee question, a great delay would be involved which, given the state of unrest to which the Prime Minister himself had referred, might prove dangerous.

Mr. de BOISANGER pointed out the difficulty of obtaining guarantees with regard to "good faith". Good faith had to be shown by deeds and not by words. Furthermore, it would be difficult to know at first sight the true limits of the ambitions of the Government of Israel. Negotiations and discussions would be necessary to lead them to moderate their ambitions. A preparatory meeting of the Conciliation Commission with the Arab States would be the most practical means to initiate this process.

In the PRIME MINISTER's personal opinion, the key of the solution was to be found in an agreement between the United States Government and King Ibn Saoud as representing the Arab countries. In 1947, he had made such a suggestion to Mr. Evatt, but in spite of the fact that both he and Mr. Marshall had approved it, nothing had been done along this line, no doubt because of the Jewish opposition. If nothing appeared possible along these lines, the Arabs would have to solve the question by their own means. In any case, the Government of Iraq proposed to request the lifting of the arms embargo, in

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view of the fact that the Jews were receiving war material without limitations or restrictions.

It would also be necessary to put an end to the bad treatment that the Jews had been victims of in Iraq during the recent months. The Prime Minister referred to the increasing difficulty of assuring the protection of the Jews resident in Iraq, under the present circumstances.

In answer to an observation by Mr. de Boisanger, who wondered whether Tel Aviv was interested in the fate of the Jews of Iraq, the Prime Minister explained that he was not thinking in terms of persecution; he did not wish the Commission to receive a false impression with regard to his personal sentiments towards the Jews. But if the Jews continued to show the bad faith that they had demonstrated until the present moment, events might take place....

(The Prime Minister did not clarify this warning).

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